

NATIONAL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AMERICAN GEOPHYSICAL UNION
2000 FLORIDA AVENUE NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20009
JUNE 14-15, 2012

THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2012 – NCADAC PREPARATORY SESSION

WELCOME

Dr. Jerry Melillo, Marine Biological Laboratory and NCADAC Chair
Kandis Wyatt, NOAA and NCADAC Designated Federal Official

Jerry Melillo welcomed the participants and noted that the session on Thursday was only preparatory and that no official business would be conducted. Dr. Melillo also made a motion that Kathy Jacobs, National Climate Assessment Director, be allowed to participate freely in the meeting; this motion was seconded and unanimously approved. Kandis Wyatt invited members of the public to sign up for the public comment period and to submit written comments.

STATUS REPORT: TIMELINE, PRODUCTS, AND PROCESSES TOWARD THE 2013 REPORT

Kathy Jacobs, Office of Science and Technology Policy and National Climate Assessment Director

Kathy Jacobs gave a summary of the convening lead authors' (CLA) meeting that was held on June 12-14, 2012. Topics discussed during the CLA meeting included confidence and likelihood statements; development and format of key messages; and editing and writing guidance clarification. The CLAs worked to develop overarching themes to help organize key messages from each chapter into broader findings for the whole report. They also worked together to coordinate overlapping content among chapters.

Ms. Jacobs reminded the participants of the production timeline for the 2013 report and stressed the importance of its timely delivery. She commended authors and NCADAC members for meeting all deadlines thus far and discussed upcoming milestones and activities in greater detail. She noted that the outline of the report remains unchanged and that the proposed products include a digital publication (for the full content of the report) and a shorter summary document (to be printed). This topic would be discussed and decided at the following day's NCADAC meeting.

PROPOSAL FOR REACHING CONSENSUS

Terese (T.C.) Richmond, GordonDerr, L.L.P. and NCA Co-Chair

T.C. Richmond reminded participants that no decisions could be made during this preparatory session. She then explained the following concept for a future decision by the NCADAC:

- A quorum must be present (30 out of the 44 eligible voting members) either in person or by phone; email or proxy voting will not be allowed.
- Decisions will be made by consensus, which will be vigorously pursued for all substantive decisions.
- If consensus cannot be achieved, a vote (in which names are recorded) will be taken and a motion passed when it is supported by either 23 of or two-thirds of the eligible voting members present (whichever is greater), with percentages rounded down to the nearest whole number.
- If requested, dissenting opinions regarding procedural matters will appear in the official minutes of the meeting.

Discussion of this proposal would be held the following day during the official NCADAC meeting.

SUSTAINED ASSESSMENT PROGRESS

Dr. John Hall, Department of Defense and NCADAC Federal Ex Officio Member

John Hall provided a progress report and future plans for the Sustained Assessment Working Group (SAWG). In January 2012, a white paper was jointly produced by the SAWG and the Interagency National Climate Assessment (INCA) group, in which they developed prioritization criteria for report products and activities. They began identifying special report topic areas of interest to agencies or are within their mission areas.

Hall gave an overview of the structure of the Sustained Assessment (SA) chapter for the 2013 report and discussed how the authors have canvassed for input for both the chapter and the SA work plan across a variety of groups. He also gave an overview of the SAWG work plan and noted that a draft version of it should be made publicly available when the full report draft is released in December 2012.

Discussion

An inquiry was made regarding the long-term guiding vision for the SA process. Kathy Jacobs noted that the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) has a new strategic plan with four goals, one of which is to conduct sustained assessments. She noted that USGCRP's vision for assessment is one of engagement and capacity building, including a distributed process that is led by and motivated by central coordination, but also engaging stakeholders in the assessment process. John Hall added that SA is also driven by the failure of past assessments to maintain capacity over time; it is very inefficient to rebuild the assessment capacity for each report.

There was some concern expressed regarding the lack of mention of a long-term review process for continuing to meet Information Quality Act (IQA) standards. Dr. Hall noted that more discussion was planned for this topic on the following day.

Several participants noted the need for stakeholder partnerships in order to sustain the assessment process. In response, Ms. Jacobs discussed the development of the NCA Network (NCAnet), which is well underway with over 50 organizational members.

CLIMATE SCIENCE CHAPTER UPDATE

Dr. Donald J. Wuebbles, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and NCADAC Executive Secretariat Member

Don Wuebbles gave an update on the progress being made by the *Climate Science* chapter authors. They are also responsible for writing the *Frequently Asked Questions* and *Climate Primer* for the 2013 report. He discussed some new findings, topics, modeling studies, and levels of confidence. He noted that an increase in both data and analyses provides a much clearer picture of climate in the U.S. than in past assessments.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THEMES AND KEY FINDINGS; APPROACH TO NRC MEETING IN JULY

Kathy Jacobs, Office of Science and Technology Policy and National Climate Assessment Director

Kathy Jacobs gave a summary of the overarching themes discussion from the breakout sessions of the convening lead author (CLA) meeting that occurred earlier in the week. The CLA breakouts grouped key messages for communication to the National Research Council (NRC); developed revised draft themes based on the grouped key messages; and discussed the major findings that appear in the key messages from the individual chapters. The CLAs also discussed criteria for overarching themes of the report, including 1) issues of foundational science, 2) issues of strong public interest, 3) issues that appear repeatedly across the report, and 4) emerging issues. The CLAs discussed that overarching themes could also be related to response options that would provide direct climate-change benefits, be relevant to decision support needs, or be related to development of Sustained Assessment processes. As an alternate set of organizing criteria, the CLAs discussed other categories, including: 1) items that are new science or new in the report; 2) topics about which certainty has increased since the last report; 3) topics that are controversial or potentially high impact; and 4) topics that are not being explicitly covered in the report.

Kathy Jacobs provided a list of some possible report findings that had been discussed by the CLAs for consideration by NCADAC members. The members were asked to consider these and be prepared to discuss the next day.

Discussion

Draft report findings may be shared with the NRC in July. Several comments were made about the process of developing and refining the draft report findings, including the difficulty of responding without written documents, the desire not to engage in wordsmithing compared to conceptual review, and the timeline for development of the draft that will be presented to the NRC. There was some discussion on specific items that should be included in the report findings, including the use of specific

scenarios for sea level rise, accuracy of broad messages about day-to-day impacts of climate change, and approaches to discussions of adaptation and mitigation that are not policy-prescriptive.

Description of the chapter authors' approach to traceable accounts was requested, and Kathy Jacobs explained the form that has been provided to authors and the use of consistent confidence and likelihood language in the traceable accounts.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No public comments were made at this time.

ADJOURN PREPARATORY MEETING

The preparatory meeting adjourned at 5pm.

FRIDAY, JUNE 15, 2012 – NCADAC MEETING

WELCOME

Dr. Jerry Melillo, Marine Biological Laboratory and NCADAC Chair
Kandis Wyatt, NOAA and NCADAC Designated Federal Official

Jerry Melillo welcomed the participants to the NCADAC meeting. Topics planned for the day include criteria for identifying and selecting report findings and planning for a sustained assessment and proposed interim reports.

PLANNING FOR SUSTAINED ASSESSMENT

Dr. John Hall, Department of Defense and NCADAC Federal Ex Officio Member

John Hall spoke about the approach to selecting assessment topics for “special reports” that are part of the sustained assessment process. One of the main components of the sustained assessment efforts will be development of reports on specific topic areas that will improve the subsequent synthesis and assessment efforts. The Interagency NCA group (INCA) has developed a draft set of topics that are of interest to multiple agencies. INCA’s list of potential interim reports includes both foundational science topics (e.g., climate scenarios, integration with CIMP5, land cover/land use updates, best practices, and indicators) and special topics for particular focus areas (e.g., extreme events, international context, or specific biogeographic regions). Special reports on foundational or special topics would allow deeper understanding of climate change effects, investigate new issues and concerns, build capacity to support more sophisticated assessments, and better support decision making. A list, compiled by INCA members, of preliminary issues of interest was presented.

Discussion

There was a discussion about the process for selecting special topic reports and the format they would take. In the context of the NCA, it will be important to understand soon what specific topics are supported or requested by NCADAC. Therefore, a decision method or process will need to be defined. Some topics of interest (such as Arctic issues) are already being addressed in different ways throughout the agencies. The NCADAC can discuss topics, scope some ideas, suggest components of a decision process, and discuss priorities with agencies or partners such as NCANet. Kathy Jacobs described the current status and plans for NCANet.

NCADAC members made several suggestions for the process, including referring to reports other than the quadrennial Assessment as “topical reports” rather than “interim reports,” which was thought to be misleading. It was suggested that priority topics might include those that are of interest to larger numbers of individual agencies, or those that were more difficult to manage in the 2013 draft and would distinctly benefit the 2017 draft. It was discussed that it is possible that some interim reports could be similar in scope to the previous set of 21 USGCRP Synthesis and Assessment products. Even if a product is not developed entirely by the NCADAC itself, it still can be reviewed and come out as a NCADAC product. There are specific rules for NCADAC products, including review by the NRC, adherence to IQA, external review, and consensus acceptance. However, there could be roles for NCADAC to participate in development of products that do not have to be reviewed by the NRC.

The role of the NCADAC in this process will be to 1) advise the government with respect to identifying priority topical areas of national and regional interest, and 2) engage with the agencies through the NCA Office and work with the staff to agree on what should be brought forward. The goal of the Sustained Assessment Working Group will be to create a process for selection and development of topical reports that includes a full NCADAC review process. As a next step in development of the process, the NCADAC Executive Secretariat will create a proposal on process to bring to the NCADAC. Members of the NCADAC are encouraged to provide input on the list of topics.

FORMAT FOR THE 2012 REPORT

Dr. Ann Waple, NOAA Technical Support Unit

Ann Waple described the proposed format for the 2013 report, including three components: an e-book for the full report, a 50 page printed summary, and an interactive web presence, as well as additional pull-outs and fact sheets as desired. The e-book would be a platform-independent, fully interactive pdf in a style similar to a magazine. It would allow multiple links within the document, would be designed to increase the accessibility and usability of the document, and will have a permanent ISBN number. The 50-page printed summary report will include a page or two for most chapters and will focus on the report findings. The web presence will be within the Global Change Information System (GCIS, a priority project of the USGCRP), and will therefore be transparent, accessible, and allow links to all information and studies that supported the report.

Discussion

There was discussion on several aspects of this topic. The development of printed summary products is already included in the timeline, and the text will be taken directly from the 2013 assessment report. Links will be allowed with many types of information, including peer-reviewed literature and other web-based information, and full references will be included. The NOAA Technical Support Unit (TSU) is still exploring the possibilities for interactive images in the PDF, such as animated multi-year maps.

DRAFT ROLLOUT PROCESS

Kathy Jacobs, Office of Science and Technology Policy and National Climate Assessment Director

Dr. Susanne Moser, Moser Consulting, NCADAC member and ES member

Dr. Ed Maibach, George Mason University, NCADAC member

Susi Moser and Ed Maibach presented some possible components of the strategy to introduce the draft report for public comment in December 2012. The goal of the rollout process will be to generate interest in the NCA. The NCA staff and NCADAC Communications and Engagement WG (CEWG) already has developed excellent resources to interact with partners and solicit comments on the draft, for example the members of NCANet, the Interagency Communication and Education team (ICE-t) within USGCRP, and other USGCRP agencies. They can continue to look for regional and sectoral representation and identify others who could help with the planning stage of engagement on the draft. The CE WG presently is looking for input from NCADAC members on possible venues, audiences, and means for soliciting input. The CEWG will come back with a plan for the rollout at the September NCADAC meeting.

Discussion

NCADAC members discussed the high importance of using this draft review period as an opportunity to get feedback and input to the NCA. However, significant concern was expressed about the need to emphasize that this product will be a draft, and not a final product. There was also concern that the draft release could overshadow the later release of the final product. NCADAC members also discussed the need for guidance to authors and presenters during the draft review process: can authors and NCADAC members discuss the contents of the report? Can they explain and/or defend the contents? It was agreed that these questions would be researched by the NCADAC Designated Federal Officials.

Dr. Jerry Melillo, Marine Biological Laboratory and NCADAC Chair

Jerry Melillo requested a formal decision on the format for the 2013 report. No decision was requested on the rollout process, because formal plan does not yet exist. It was established that a quorum was present. A motion was made for approval of the e-book format and the motion was seconded. No objections were brought forward, and consensus was achieved.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Dr. Amanda Staudt, National Wildlife Foundation

Amanda Staudt read written comments (See appendix) on the benefits of the NCAnet and the rollout process. Because no other public commenters came forward, and there was no objection from the NCADAC, Amanda Staudt was allowed to continue reading the attached written comments for 5 more minutes. No other public commenters came forward, so the public comment period was closed.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AUTHORS AND NCADAC

Kathy Jacobs, Office of Science and Technology Policy and National Climate Assessment Director

The NCADAC needs to formalize the roles of the Convening Lead Authors (CLAs), author teams, NCADAC members, and review editors. The NCADAC is responsible for developing the report, subsequent products, the sustained assessment, and other NCADAC products as may be defined, and the authors function as a working group to provide subject matter expertise and chapter drafts to the NCADAC. NCADAC scopes the process and products, including making sure the process is relevant, ensuring appropriate emphases, managing for coherence, conducting synthesis, generating inclusive products and processes, and providing comments. The CLAs and authors are responsible for the accuracy of the scientific subject matter, key messages, graphics, identification of research needs, responding to comments from NCADAC and reviewers, and creating traceable accounts. Review editors are responsible for determining whether comments that are submitted from the public and agencies have been adequately addressed. These roles had been discussed previously, but NCADAC had not taken formal action to adopt them.

Discussion

There was a suggestion that NCADAC should continue to build community between the author teams and NCADAC, in order to ensure that author teams are encouraged to engage. It was requested that NCADAC members should reach out to authors in their state or region to help them remain engaged in the process over time, since they have given so much already.

In addition to the 2013 report itself, the NCADAC will be collective authors of the 50 page executive summary document. If there are questions about the content of the full NCA report, the NCADAC is responsible. If there are questions about specific findings in chapters, individual NCADAC members will not be asked to defend them.

A motion was made and seconded to table the discussion for the present meeting. Language will be added to the roles and responsibilities to more clearly articulate the responsibilities of NCADAC members regarding the report content, and the document will be circulated for discussion in advance of the next NCADAC meeting.

REPORT INTEGRATION TEAM

Kathy Jacobs, Office of Science and Technology Policy and National Climate Assessment Director

Kathy Jacobs presented the current list of members of the Report Integration Team (RIT) working group. The RIT will review multiple chapters of the draft report to ensure consistency in the way topics are addressed across the report. Focused review will be directed at confidence characterization, consistent use of risk based framing, use of scenarios, climate science, consistency across regions, consistency across sectors and cross-sectors, consistency across decision support, mitigation, adaptation, and international themes and across regional/sectoral issues.

Discussion

There was a question whether anyone on the RIT would be looking specifically at the reference to the sustained assessment process across the chapters. It was suggested that the Sustained Assessment WG should identify a member to do that.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF REPORT FINDINGS

Dr. Jerry Melillo, Marine Biological Laboratory and NCADAC Chair

Jerry Melillo presented some criteria for selection of report findings (overall key report findings, not individual chapter key messages) to present to the National Research Council in July. It is important that the NCADAC come to agreement about the selection process. In discussion with the chairs, the suggested short set of criteria include: consistency with the 1990 Global Change Research Act, scientific defensibility, transparency (through traceable accounts), relevance to society, and avoidance of policy-prescriptiveness. The second component of the presentation was about the level of specificity and tone of the findings, for which Dr. Melillo presented the 10 findings from the 2009 report as examples.

Discussion

There were several suggestions for adjustments in wording in the criteria for report findings, which will be incorporated. There was discussion of the use of the “confidence lexicon” in the report findings; this language will appear only in the traceable accounts. There was also discussion of the level of specificity required in the report findings, and suggestions for the level of emphasis of previous findings versus presentation of new ideas. Members suggested that brief, clear headlines followed by supporting text will be the best approach for report findings.

The process for developing the report findings will be iterative. The plan is to share draft report findings in the NRC review in late July. Prior to that, NCADAC members will be invited to participate individually in informational webinars for pre-decisional discussions of draft versions of the report findings. Those webinars will be held between July 11th and 17th. Following that, the Executive Secretariat will have a phone meeting on July 18th to distill the results of the webinar discussions and select a set of draft report findings. However, nothing related to the report findings will be approved until the draft report is approved by the NCADAC for release. There was some discussion of the NRC review and the materials that would be presented. There is a precedent with NRC for holding a “showstopper” review without

any written materials. An updated matrix of all the key messages from the draft report will be available for NCADAC members to view after the revised chapters are submitted on July 2nd.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Terese (T.C.) Richmond, GordonDerr, L.L.P. and NCADAC Co-Chair

NCADAC needs to adopt a formal decision-making process to avoid potential concerns over conflicts in the future. NCADAC decisions thus far have been made largely by consensus, with or without a formal quorum. Formalizing the decision-making process at this point will not negate any decisions previously made. The current proposal is that, in the future, a quorum will require 30 of the 44 voting members. The members constituting the quorum will attempt to reach a consensus. If all possibilities have been considered and no consensus can be reached, a vote will be taken. This will require either the 23 or 2/3rds of the quorum present, whichever is greater, to pass. Dissenting views will be heard, and will be recorded for procedural issues. However, the proposal is that dissenting views on substantive issues will not be included in NCA reports or minutes.

Discussion

There was discussion about the implications of voting on a report, the quorum calculation, allowing or prohibiting dissenting opinions to be published, focusing on the original plan of consensus approval of the report, and describing whether the proposed process would apply to all NCADAC actions. Due to the number of points to be discussed, as well as the diminished number of NCADAC members present at this point in the day, the proposal was tabled for further discussion at the next meeting.

SUMMARY OF MEETING

Dr. Jerry Melillo, Marine Biological Laboratory and NCADAC Chair

Dr. Melillo summarized the outcomes of the meeting. The NCADAC:

- Established a pathway to prepare for the NRC review in July.
- Tabled a decision about consensus decision-making until a future meeting with a quorum.
- Approved the proposal for the format (e-book) of the 2013 report.
- Agreed that the Chair, Vice Chairs and Executive Secretariat will incorporate comments from NCADAC on rollout ideas and a plan for approval, which will be discussed at an upcoming NCADAC meeting.
- Discussed the roles and responsibilities of NCADAC and authors.
- Agreed that NCADAC members should reach out and maintain communication with CLAs throughout the development process.
- Reviewed and discussed the sustained assessment and potential future topics, post 2013. The planned next steps in the coming months will be:
- By July 2, authors will have revised key messages, and finalized 3000-word draft chapters.

- July 2-27: Co-chairs will share draft key messages and draft report findings through NCADAC webinars, and will communicate process and product issues with NRC.
- July 18: Executive Secretariat will meet to discuss results of NRC meeting. Feedback will be brought back to NCADAC.
- August: RIT team will commence its work
- September: NCADAC will review draft in groups.
- Late September: NCADAC meeting for approval.
- NCADAC will engage in discussions and decisions on these topics in the next few months.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

APPENDIX A: ATTENDEES

Non-Federal Members in attendance

Name	Affiliation
Daniel Abbasi	GameChange Capital, LLC
Rosina Bierbaum	University of Michigan
Maria Blair	American Cancer Society
James (Jim) Buizer	University of Arizona
Lynne Carter	Louisiana State University
F. Stuart (Terry) Chapin	University of Alaska
Placido dos Santos	Arizona Department of Water Resources
Paul Fleming	Seattle Public Utilities
Guido Franco	California Energy Commission
Mary Gade	Gade Environmental Group, LLC
Aris Georgakakos	Georgia Institute of Technology
David Gustafson	Monsanto Company
David Hales	College of the Atlantic
Sharon Hays	CSC
Peter Kareiva	The Nature Conservancy
Anthony Janetos	Joint Global Change Research Inst., University of Maryland
Rattan Lal	Ohio State University
Arthur Lee	Chevron Corporation
Jo-Ann Leong	University of Hawaii
Rezaul Mahmood	Western Kentucky University
Ed Maibach	George Mason University
Michael McGeehin	RTI International
Jerry Melillo	Marine Biological Laboratory
Susanne Moser	Susanne Moser Research & Consulting and Stanford University
Philip Mote	Oregon State University
Jayantha Obeysekera	South Florida Water Management District
Lindene Patton	Zurich Financial Services
John Posey	East-West Gateway Council of Governments
Terese (T.C.) Richmond	Van Ness Feldman GordonDerr
Andrew A. Rosenberg	Conservation International and University of New Hampshire
Richard Schmalensee	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Henry (Gerry) Schwartz	HGS Consultants, LLC
Joel Smith	Stratus Consulting
Don Wuebbles	University of Illinois
Gary Yohe	Wesleyan University

Federal Members in attendance

Name	Affiliation
Virginia Burkett	U.S. Department of the Interior
John Hall	Department of Defense
Alice Hill	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Leonard Hirsch	Smithsonian Institution
Bill Hohenstein	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Pat Jacobberger-Jellison	NASA
Thomas Karl	NOAA/Subcommittee on Global Change Research
Linda Lawson	U.S. Department of Transportation
Andy Miller	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Robert O'Connor	National Science Foundation
Margaret Walsh	U.S. Department of Agriculture

USGCRP, NOAA, and NCA Staff in attendance

Name	Affiliation
Ralph Cantral	USGCRP (NOAA)
Cynthia Decker	NOAA
Bill Emanuel	USGCRP (PNNL)
Wyatt Freeman	USGCRP
Bryce Golden-Chen	USGCRP
Nancy Grimm	USGCRP (NSF)
Paula Hennon	CICS, NC
Kathy Jacobs	USGCRP (OSTP)
Melissa Kenney	USGCRP (NOAA)
Ken Kunkel	CICS, NC
Fred Lipschultz	USGCRP (NASA)
Glynis Lough	USGCRP
Rebecca Martin	USGCRP
Ana Pinheiro-Privette	CICS, NC
Laura Stevens	CICS, NC
Brooke Stewart	NOAA
Anne Waple	NOAA
Emily Wasley	USGCRP
Kandis Wyatt	NOAA

Other attendees

Name	Affiliation
Judsen Bruzgul	American Meteorological Society
Kaitlin Chell	Lewis-Burke
Daniel Glick	CICS-NC
Susan Hassol	Climate Communication
Linda Joyce	US Forest Service
Allison Leidner	AAAS, NASA Applied Sciences
Nancy Maynard	NASA
Rick Pilz	Climate Science Watch
Sara Spizzirri	AAAS
Amanda Staudt	National Wildlife Federation
Nick Sundt	WWF
Gene Takle	Iowa State University

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments to National Climate Assessment Development and Advisory Committee

Amanda Staudt, Senior Scientist, Climate and Energy Program, National Wildlife Federation

June 15, 2012

Update on NCAnet Activities

Let me start by saying that NWF and other organizations are pleased to have this opportunity for more structured engagement with the National Climate Assessment process. We have significant interest in the NCA as a way to help our constituencies confront climate change. NGOs are on the front lines of translating climate science information for use in various decision-making contexts. Many of the organizations who have signed up for NCAnet already use USGCRP outputs for engaging their constituencies. We are excited that NCA is looking for ways to leverage the capacity of these NGOs to greatly extend its reach.

The NCAnet partners welcome the opportunity for two-way engagement with the process. Many partner groups are well-positioned to provide input to the process, so that future outputs can be more responsive to the needs of our constituencies. At the same time, we want to aid NCA in sharing the assessment findings broadly and in ways that can be meaningful to different audiences.

On behalf of the group, I wanted to share a brief update on our activities. The full NCAnet has been meeting monthly this year, and a subset of organizations has been meeting more frequently to help figure out how the group might work most effectively.

1. Affinity Groups

One challenge is that there is such a diversity of member organizations, in terms of the issues they address as well as their familiarity with NCA. For this reason, the NCAnet is organizing a number of Affinity Groups that would include subsets of the member organizations. The specific set of groups is still being sorted out, but a few have begun to coalesce:

- Engineering and Infrastructure, led by American Society of Civil Engineering
- Decision Support, led by the Association of Climate Change Officers (ACCO)
- Ecosystems and Biodiversity, led by National Wildlife Federation

These Affinity Groups would

- Coordinate input to NCA from our target constituency – e.g., new data sources, updates on current management or adaptation practice, or review of draft materials
- Organize engagement opportunities with target constituency – e.g., hosting sessions at conferences, organizing “Climate Conversations” and other opportunities for public discourse, holding webinars
- Produce communication materials tailored for target constituency – e.g., pamphlets, mini-reports, video series, websites, blogs
- Provide hands-on decision support – e.g., helping make sense of data and tools at the local level
- Help reach new audiences – e.g., identify and bring in new NCAnet members from our respective areas of interest

2. NCA Ambassadors

The NCAnet is also exploring the possibility of creating a fleet of NCA Ambassadors, essentially individuals who can seek out opportunities for communicating NCA results to their communities. This idea is still early in discussion, so we don't have a lot details to share at this point.

3. Schedule for technical inputs and other interim products

Several NCAnet members are quite interested in better understanding when the existing technical input reports and other interim products might be available to the public. We urge NCA and the supporting agencies to use these reports as important engagement opportunities in the lead-up to the final report release. NCAnet member organizations can devote some of their communication resources to releases of these reports, but only if we know when they are going to be released. We can be even more helpful if we have a sense of what these reports include and can prepare in advance for their release, rather than scrambling to respond after a release. I personally think (1) it would be a huge lost opportunity if these reports are not used for communication and engagement; and (2) it is important for NCA to be producing a series of reports and other communication products to sustain engagement with a range of constituencies.

4. Using NCAnet to help with review and other NCADAC objectives

The NCAnet partners have begun to discuss how they can participate in the public review of the draft report later this year, for example by getting it out to our members or hosting small conversations with constituencies. We would welcome your input on how we can provide input to the authoring teams most usefully. For example, one idea would be for the Affinity Groups to provide synthesized input from their constituencies in contrast to numerous comments from individuals.

The NCAnet partners also wondered if there are other points where the NCADAC or lead authors might find input from these organizations helpful. For example, could there be some benefit of having NCAnet review the major themes that are being developed now?

Or, could NCAnet help identify topics for future interim reports? In fact, for these additional reports to meet decision-maker and other stakeholder needs, it would seem obvious that those audiences be consulted about what information would be useful to them. NCAnet could provide a conduit for that sort of consultation.

Or, could NCAnet help identify individuals who could be featured in the storytelling component of the report?

In closing, we are beginning to nurture a group of very engaged NGOs. I would urge the NCADAC and the NCA to consider how this group can help you meet your objectives.

Comments about the Draft Report Roll-Out

It is critically important that the NCA have a strong communications and outreach plan in place for the draft report roll-out. Interested individuals and organizations will find the draft and make comments in the traditional and social media. Thus, it is better that the NCA manage the process proactively. If NCA doesn't frame this process for the media, someone will. I can assure you that organizations involved in advocacy will promote it. Why? Because the advocacy community is hungry for materials to promote that support their own agendas! Finally, a public and proactive engagement strategy for the draft report

is essential for meeting the NCA's stated objectives of having a transparent process with significant public engagement.

I understand that official NCA participants may be limited in their ability to be spokespeople about the draft report. Thus, the program may want to consider helping to prepare NCAnet partners to be surrogates.

Finally, there is at least one precedent of a USGCRP process that included a very public release of the draft along with two NRC reviews. In 2002, the US Climate Change Science Program (USCCSP) released their draft strategic plan and held a big workshop, all of which received lots of media coverage. The NRC reviews of the draft and final plans all got extensive media coverage.